

Idle Simulacra in Julian Barnes' *England, England*

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ABSTRACT

Julian Barnes' *England, England* is a satire on the cultural heritage tourism which has boomed in England in recent years. The novel reveals Barnes' view that tourism industry is responsible for a crisis of representation caused by the conditions of the consumer society in which the signs, quickly circulated and consumed, displace the traditional designs of "identity", both individual and collective. The novel to which Baudrillard's theories of simulation and consumer society provide the theoretical framework and inspiration is about the reproduction of a new model of Englishness for marketable aims. In the light of this background, this paper intends to show the dystopic result of seeing heritage as a commodity in *England, England*.

Key Words: Julian Barnes, *England, England*, Consumer Society, Simulation, Dystopia.

ÖZET

Julian Barnes'ın *England, England* adlı romanı, son yıllarda İngiltere'de ivme kaydeden 'kültürel miras turizmi' üzerine bir taşlamadır. Romanın odağını, Barnes'ın "Turizm endüstrisi temsil krizine yol açar" tezi oluşturur; bu krizin nedeni, göstergelerin hızla dolaştığı ve tüketildiği tüketim toplumunun, hem bireysel hem de kolektif zeminde geleneksel "kimlik" tasarımlarını temelden yoksun kılan koşullarıdır. Kuramsal çerçevesini ve esin kaynağını Baudrillard'ın simülasyon ve tüketim toplumu üzerine düşüncelerinin belirlediği bu roman, pazarlama amacıyla bir 'İngilizlik modeli' oluşturulmasını konu alır. Bu makale *England, England*'da kültürel mirasın meta olarak görülmesinin distopik sonucunu göstermeyi amaçlar.

Key Words: Julian Barnes, *England, England*, Tüketici Toplum, Simülasyon, Dystopia.

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There are many differences between the modern and postmodern approach to representation. Since modernism is concerned with epistemological questions and thus seeks ways for an ideal or most effective reflection of the real, it stands to reason that modernism still has a faith in the real; postmodernism, on the contrary, not only discredits the reality of the real, but underlines the self-reflexivity of the image because of its ontological questioning and its belief in plurality. This comes to mean that the modernist approach strictly separates between representation and reality, whereas in postmodernism this distinction collapses, a phenomenon which Jean Baudrillard (1994) calls 'implosion' and Scott Lash (1990) 'de-differentiation'. As a result, postmodernism sees in every representation the emergence of an undifferentiated equivalent form of the real, a simulacrum which substitutes the real as the (re)product of a simulative (re)process.

Representation and simulation can be seen as related methods of re/creating 'a real' in which simulation is the more sophisticated approach of the two, partly because representation seems to imitate only the outer quality of the sign while simulation is more complex. After all, simulation is often thought to be as something false which stands for something real since "[i]n its artifice, the simulation is considered 'artificial', and loses all the material (and ontological) weight associated with 'reality'" (Chambers 55). According to Baudrillard, "representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation", whereas "simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum" (1994: 6). The postmodern world, where "[...] nothing any longer possesses intrinsic value, in and for itself" (Porter 2), is concerned with the simulation and continuous production of signs and so Baudrillard, for one, argues (1994: 122-123; MacCannell and MacCannell 124; Chambers 59) that we have lost all contacts with the real and, therefore, live in a world controlled by the principle of simulation. Because of its untraceability, we no longer know what the real looks like; and simulations have thus become simulations of other simulations and the only knowledge we get about the real is the knowledge mediated by the simulation. Since it is hard to trace back the meaning of the simulation to the real, the image always and already threatens to replace the real in the postmodern world (Baudrillard, 1994: 2). Baudrillard also

asserts that the boundaries between the real and the image get more and more blurred in the transition from one order to another in a four-order model of representation. In the first order, it is easy to distinguish between the representation and reality because the created image is just an artificial representation (6). In the second order, the real still exists but the distinction between the image and the real begins to blur because the image "masks and denatures a profound reality" (6) and further, the image is so perfect that to determine its difference from the real requires a special skill. The image "plays at being an appearance" and "masks the *absence* of a profound reality" (6, emphasis original) in the third order. In the fourth order, however, "it is no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation" (6) and we no longer even have the real for reference. Here simulation stands for "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (1). In the realm of the hyperreal, there is the proliferation of the image, which can also be called the simulacrum preceding its model (1) and not representing an underlying reality albeit self-referential. Besides, the images are the "murderers of their own model" (5) in this stage because they "murder" the real in order to seize its place and afterwards, "Never again will the real have the chance to produce itself" (2).

In this context, there is a great affinity between Julian Barnes' dystopian novel *England, England* (1998) and Baudrillard's theories of simulation along with his approach to consumer society. As briefly given above, all four stages of simulation are present in the novel and especially the simulations of the past and cultural heritage change the utopic flow of the novel into a dystopic one. Since the constitution of history as an academic discipline in the nineteenth century there have always been debates concerning the truth-value of history (White, 1993: 38-42). According to Linda Hutcheon the past is not accessible and our links to it are restricted by its textualized traces and therefore the past, not unlike all texts, is open to interpretation (81). Accordantly, postmodern theory advocates a contingent or variable perception of the past rather than seeing it as an ultimate truth. In *England, England* the interpretations of an absent or nonexistent original (history) result in the construction of simulacra modified to the preferences of the present consumer society and thus the novel's dystopian theme evolves on the crisis of representation and mourns the loss of the 'real' while ironically exaggerating the victory of the image over its original.

Barnes' novel begins with the utopia of the media tycoon, Sir Jack Pittman, to re-build England on the Isle of Wight. Not only is this enterprise concerned with the re-modelling of cultural, historical and natural attractions of England, but also it deals with the embodiment of her historical and cultural heritage. Thus, the project can be seen as the construction of a world of simulacra in the form of Disneyland, Disneyworld, EPCOT or other theme parks which exist in our contemporary world where tourism has turned out to be a great consumption-industry. These parks embrace "a collage of juxtaposed artefacts which bring together and compress centuries and regions" (Bryman 165) and furthermore they open up some worlds –sometimes separate or entangled– of history, future, magic or fantasy for the participation of the visitors¹. With the participation in such a Disneyesque universe, the distinction between the visitor and the actor, work and play, and also reality and simulation is fused or at least this is the end-effect intended to be created in the visitors (167). Indeed, in these parks and other places of consumption in our contemporary world distinctions have imploded and created interpenetrated phenomena, or, to be more precise, undifferentiated entreties (wholes). Sometimes even whole villages are transformed into theme parks in which the peasants/employees accomplish their daily tasks in order to attract the visitors and are also paid to do so. Similarly in *England, England*, the real Royal Family is employed to act out their daily routines (Barnes 178) or the real Manchester football team also plays its matches on the isle England, England (142), which indicates the different layers of reality in the novel. Whether real or simulation, the increasing number of theme parks in contemporary Western societies points to the fact that visitors prefer the simulacra to the original and visit these parks in order "to marvel at their inauthenticity" (Bryman 177). Likewise, in the novel, the famous statue of David by Michelangelo was replaced by a copy and afterwards ninety three percent of those polled said that they do not feel the need to seek the original in a museum after having seen the perfect replica (Barnes 181). The advantages of the simulacra are further explained by a character who is named the "French intellectual" and who reminds us of Baudrillard:

[...] the third millennium is inevitably, is ineradicably modern and that it is our intellectual duty to submit to that modernity, and to dismiss as sentimental and inherently fraudulent all yearnings for what is dubiously termed the 'original.' We must demand the replica, since the reality, the truth, the authenticity of the replica is the one we can possess, colonize, reorder, find jouissance in, and, finally, if and when we decide, it is the reality which, since it is our destiny, we may meet, confront and destroy. (Barnes 55)

In view of the fact that visitors in *England, England* do not demand the "original" but the things they have imagined about England (71), the project of Sir Jack to build an *ersatz* England turns from the (re)construction of what England authentically is to the (re)construction of what it is supposed to be, namely the construction of a miniature England with all its top attractions fitted up to meet "modern claims". Put another way, the enterprise is about the commodification of the past and since commodification is one of the processes of de-differentiation (Lash 52) it is not surprising that the apparently 'well-intended' project in the novel develops into a disguised profit-oriented empire. Consequently, five-star versions of the historical buildings and shopping centres are interspersed on the Isle of Wight, which is renamed "England, England" while the original one is called Old England. The concepts of reality and representation are intentionally used and abused in the creation of the pseudo-historical buildings since these do not only serve as historical attractions but in fact are real shopping malls. The choice of the Isle of Wight as the appropriate project-space is also intended for two reasons: first of all, it is used with the aim of creating a perfect simulation since the actual referent England is close to hand and is an island, too. Secondly, the island is a traditional setting of utopian and dystopian literatures. Since utopian and dystopian works arise out of the writer's disaffection with society (Booker 1994a: 3), these works prefer imaginatively distant settings, that is to say, places or times unknown or apart from the society of the writer. Being the compact version of England, the project island enables visitors to see all the so-called historical sights of Old England in a single week (Barnes 181). As a result, the project island becomes more preferable for visitors because here they are treated better while they seem to have lost their

significance in real England (184). The overall project is a successful simulation not only of England and Englishness but also of a real country with all the things that make a country. For example the island applies for international memberships (EEC, World Bank, IMF) and has its own laws, policies (PITCO policies) and even its own currency. Furthermore, international regulations are also modified when visitors, on their arrival in the island, are not checked for visa, but for their "credit-worthiness" (181). The theme park called England, England blooms into a welfare state and secedes, whereas Old England declines into a pre-industrial nation and hence is renamed *Albion*. The simulation is so perfect and desirable that "the world began to forget that 'England' had ever meant anything except England, England" (253). England, England substitutes for Old England and "becomes the thing itself" (61) or in Baudrillardian terms it replaces and herewith *perfectly murders* its own model. Although real life has its ups and downs, these parks offer a world under full control where everything is *tamed* to the satisfaction of the visitors. Indeed, such parks serve as "an impressive display of human imaginative and technological capability in which visitors [...] coming from around the globe gather for relaxation and enjoyment in an idealized mood of peace and harmony" (Booker, 1994b: 1-2). Such parks, however, create a realm of escapism from reality or social problems which according to Baudrillard is a negative escapism. Baudrillard claims that these parks are intentionally presented as imaginary in order to give the impression that the rest is real while actually all of what surrounds them is no longer real, but just part of the hyperreal and as such "it is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real" (1994:12-3). These parks detract our attention from social problems of the temporal world, yet they have become the answer to the consumerist request of the postmodern world. Sir Jack emphasizes this very fact in the novel as follows:

'What we want,' said Sir Jack, ... is magic. ... We want our Visitors to feel that they have passed through a mirror, that they have left their own worlds and entered a new one, different yet strangely familiar, where things are not done as in other parts of the inhabited planet, but as if in a rare dream.' (Barnes 120)

But in fact visitors are passive in these parks and even their visit is regulated by the administration of the park (Walsh 177-78). Thus, "they are herded about the park like cattle (or inmates), buying what they are supposed to, seeing what they are supposed to, and spending countless hours standing in queues waiting for the privilege of doing so" (Booker 1994b: 3). This happens because in the consumer society everything is reduced to its sign-value and meaning becomes unimportant, and the slogan for the theme parks becomes "participation". According to Baudrillard consumption has become a collective function and lost its individual function; and the sense of enjoyment turns to participation in "a generalized system of exchange and production of coded values" (2003: 78), which indicates that consumption is a "powerful element of social control" (84).

The proliferation of these parks, especially of those in England, is sometimes explained with nostalgia because it is often assumed that it is nostalgia that reconstructs "the meaning of the memory of the lost thing" (Baudrillard, 1994: 6; MacCannell and MacCannell 134). Indeed nostalgia can be seen as another influence but a less effective one. In history, the English used to enjoy being members of a great and important nation with unlimited boundaries on the world scene but as justifications for the "greatness" of Great Britain started to fall away, people turned to the past to find symbols of their identity, and indeed their importance (Cussick 308). The considerable boom in the cultural heritage industry of England in recent years can be seen as a means of fulfilling such a longing or compensation for the loss of its "greatness". These enterprises especially aim at making the past accessible to the present. However, the main reason for resuscitating the past is its potential for high profit rather than national feelings, which also explains why cultural heritage tourism has become a vital source of income for many countries all around the world. The problem with such places is that they sometimes risk at creating a past which has never existed. Alan Bryman, in his extensive research on Disney's worlds, designates a close link between nostalgia and consumption and explains it as follows:

The past is subject to heavy doses of nostalgia which not only results in a skewed account of the past, but also serves to link the warm feelings inspired by nostalgia to consumption. This nostalgia is particularly interesting because it seems to avoid the sense of melancholy with which it is often associated. (142)

This relation is also one of the striking themes that exactly make up the novel *England, England*. Sir Jack is such a kind of tycoon (hero as greedy entrepreneur) as to be found often in dystopian fiction and his motivation to build England, England derives not only from his patriotic desire to restore England's glory but also –and mainly– from his desire for profit:

You-we-England-my client-is-are-a nation of great age, great history, great accumulated wisdom. Social and cultural history-stacks of it, reams of it-eminently marketable, never more so than in the current climate [...] We are already what others may hope to become. [...] We must sell our past to other nations as their future! (Barnes 39-40)

To restore the past needs memory. Memory is not a record of the past but a simulative version of it achieved through mental process and the construction of memory and all the other forms of history involve a certain kind of "narrative" which according to Hayden White is the predominant mode of historical representation (1999: 3). Therefore White claims every history to be a "verbal artifact" (4), "a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of explaining what they were by representing them" (1993: 2, emphasis original) accordingly with this approach the past becomes a product of interpretation. Frank Ankersmit even goes further and argues that "we no longer have any texts, any past, but just interpretations of them" (278). The first chapter of *England, England* starts with Martha Cochrane, the novel's protagonist, questioning her past, to be more accurate, her struggle between remembering and forgetting the past. As a child, she used to play with a jigsaw puzzle of England and whenever she lost one of the pieces, her father turned up with it; however, one day neither the missing piece nor her father came back. Consequently, she turned into a man-hating cynic to compensate for the losses in her life. Quite unaware of "whether she was meant to remember or to forget the past" (Barnes 17), she intentionally

began to lose the pieces of the puzzle one by one. Such an action can be seen as a manipulation of the past inasmuch as she tries to make it an idealized account of what she wants it to be. Due to the fact that "memory can efface the memory of man, as well as it can efface man in his own memory" (Baudrillard, 1994: 49) and because it is likely that a person will only remember details, which he thinks are noteworthy recalling, the whole process of memory becomes a mere ideological framing of the past. The very importance of memory in all kinds of representation of the past proves that like fiction, history also constructs its object. This thought leads postmodern theorists to reject history as an objective science or a reliable source of knowledge (Wesseling 4). White underlines the existence of discourse in historiography which, according to him, does not come to mean that historiography is inherently untruthful but "that its truths are of two kinds: factual and figurative" (1999: 10). Hutcheon's approach to historiography that it is not objective anymore also does not come to mean that she rejects the notion that historiography represents historical facts but she suggests that "all past 'events' are potential historical 'facts', but the ones that become facts are those that are chosen to be narrated" (75).

The forming of authentic individual, national or historical identity also becomes problematic in that memory plays a vital role in defining such identities and unfortunately the original for such identities does not exist anymore or even has never existed. Homi Bhabha's assertion that nations are narrations arises out of a similar perception that "nations, not unlike narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye only" (1). In the novel, for instance, the Englishmen's –and Martha's– view that Francis Drake was a hero is challenged by the Spaniards' –and Christina's– assumption that he was a pirate. Martha's explanation for her argument sounds too simple: "the comforting if necessary fiction of the defeated" (Barnes 7). The juxtaposition of these two disparate notions of the same historical character proves the multiple interpretability of the past as well the fact that the victors/suppressors and the defeated/suppressed of history often create the past separately in their own image (Wesseling 110; White, 1999: 70). Thus, the questioning of history becomes one of the recurrently raised subjects in Barnes'

novel and throughout there is a link between Martha meditating on memory and a nation remembering its past, both of which have a close affinity with Baudrillard's orders of simulation:

If a memory wasn't a thing but a memory of a memory of a memory, mirrors set in parallel, then what the brain told you now about what it claimed that had happened then would be coloured by what had happened in between. It was like a country remembering its history the past was never just the past, it was what made the present able to live with itself. (Barnes 6)

As a result, it can be claimed that contemporary society saturated with simulacra has a great influence upon identity. In other words, we disappear behind our image (Baudrillard, 1994: 1) and simulate numerous socially-constructed identities imposed on us by interior as well as exterior forces (Clarke 57). These forces are often defined by our consuming activities and in this way what we consume becomes the indication of our identity. Thus it can be claimed that today consumption rather more than ethnic or cultural origin designates identity and consequently it has become nearly impossible to encounter authentic/stable identities. Consequently, shifting identities, or images (prestige) shaped to meet social, cultural or other influential claims, are typical of the postmodern society as Vera Nünning rightly asserts:

England, England shows that the rituals and images held to be representative of a nation since times immemorial are quite often of surprisingly recent origin, and more often than not they are invented to begin with, thus reflecting the present-day needs and concerns of a community trying to establish continuity with a suitable historical past. (76)

This crisis of collective identity can also be seen in the novel when Martha claims that the information she gives about herself in her application for the post at PITCO Company is true if it suits and that she could change it in any way if not proper for the post (Barnes 45). The members of the executive committee who together with Sir Jack discuss the project to commercialize England and

Englishness have interesting names, which emphasize their role within the project. There is Paul the Idea Catcher, Martha the Appointed Cynic, Jeff the Concept Developer, Dr. Max the Official Historian, the secretaries who are all called "Susie" and even the French intellectual who represents Baudrillard not only with his physical appearance (52) but also with his theories. Such a labelling as mentioned above is not only a characteristic of the postmodern society which is often associated with the consumer society (Clarke 13) but also of the dystopian societies. In dystopias we do not often come across individualities, but generalized people who remind us of types because they are reduced to their functions within the society they live in (Booker, 1994a: 15). In a way, it can be claimed that there is a strong connection between the consumer, postmodern and dystopian societies. To emphasize the interpenetration, Barnes gives a chance to Sir Jack to discuss the very nature of reality with his team before the project goes into operation and to underline the importance of the "exchange value" of the individual in a consumer society:

What is real? ... Are you real for instance-you and you? ... You are real to yourselves, of course, but that is not how these things are judged at the highest level. My answer would be No. ... I could have you substituted, with ... simulacra, more quickly than I could sell my beloved Brancusi. Is money real? It is, in a sense, more real than you. (31)

The quotation clearly pinpoints Barnes' satirical approach towards contemporary consumer society in which according to Baudrillard even human, social, political, economical relationships are produced in the same way as objects (2003: 172) and "*consumption has gradually supplanted the tragic dimension of identity*" (192, emphasis original). Money is the most dominant currency in the consumer society and its sufficient amount makes nearly everything purchasable, including people. According to Sir Jack, the omnipotence of money or in his words "carrots" (Barnes 86) will make the realization of the project possible. This is also true in a sense when later in the novel Martha, together with her lover Paul bereaves Sir Jack of his control over England, England by means of sexual blackmail (175) and later Sir Jack acquires it back through bribing Paul (234).

A worldwide poll to determine the "fifty quintessences" of England and Englishness is undertaken in order to determine the expectations of the people for a heritage park like England, England. It emphasizes the importance of consumerist needs in the shaping of identity. The results of the polled foreigners are similar to those taken from English people. The fifty topics linked with England include the Royal Family, Big Ben, and the Manchester United Football Club, the myth about Robin Hood and his Merry Men and the Battle of Britain. However, the worldwide research shows that especially the characteristics associated with Englishness are mere subjective constructions. Indeed, they include personal impressions like bad underwear, snobbery, perfidy and hypocrisy (84) which on the other hand Sir Jack sees as "barefaced character assassination" (87) and therefore leaves out in his project. The poll also suggests the importance of the media on the gathering of knowledge since most of the foreigners who were polled never had visited England. As the project is about the commercialization of history, Dr. Max questions some English people about their historical knowledge and finds out that the people know so little about their nation and their origin which is also emphasized by Nünning:

[...] the national 'echo-chamber' supposedly ringing with voices and traces of the past is curiously hollow, consisting at best of names, dates or meaningless catch-phrases. Any attempt at forging a national identity therefore has to reckon with elusive memories, lack of knowledge, and highly distorted patriotic views of history. (66)

The superficial knowledge of the people is not only exploited in *England, England* but also in the creation of past or fantasy realms in Disneyesque parks in the contemporary world. Besides, the versions of historical, mythical or fantasy characters displayed in such parks become the definitive version for the visitors (Bryman 190) since they determine our notion about the untraceable or nonexistent real. All these simulacra also arouse more interest of people because they radiate their own meanings by way of entertaining which is an effective method of learning. For example some parks serve as theatres of the past in which history is acted and thus taught in a story form, which goes with Guy Debord's spectacle society where culture has destroyed from within. Barnes

implies a great danger created by these parks: they carelessly reconstruct history or myths in order to meet expectations of the present day and may harm the image of a nation in the long term. Concordantly, Kevin Walsh indicates the threat of historical amnesia:

Unlike real places these heritage environments are not historic environments which have developed 'naturally' over time as the town, village or city has developed. Heritage sites are constructed as 'time capsules' severed from history, islands of mediated image, sites of out-of-town heritage shopping. These life-sized 'time capsules' need to be considered carefully. In many ways they represent a form of historical bricolage, a melting pot for historical memories. So many places and so many times represented in a contrived pace, may in fact contribute to a sense of historical amnesia, rather than the desired aim of maintaining a sense of the past, or tradition. (103)

In *England, England* Sir Jack forges simulacra of myths according to the expectations of his customers. Famous historical personalities like Shakespeare, Dr. Samuel Johnson or legendary figures such as Robin Hood and his Merry Men or events like the Battle of Britain are acted, or rather simulated by actors. As everyone knows only what is known to everybody about the myths (Barnes 148) and there is no original model, the visitors will not object to a modern recreation if only constructed to appeal to one's senses. Sir Jack uses this opportunity and plasters the black holes about the legends, which can be seen as an "imposition of a plot on a plotless reality" (Wesseling 120) with profit-promising alterations. "Robin Hood and his gang" is the myth with the highest marketable potential and as such it also becomes the most manipulated one in *England, England*. It is with the aim of appealing to female, gay and lesbian visitors as well that new members with such inclinations are added to the gang.

Everything seems to be under control on the island since everything is monitored and runs according to regulations and there is a schedule for every

activity². This condition calls attention to the dystopic nature of the island (Burnett and Rollin 87). Ironically enough, the simulations in England, England get out of control because of their perfection. Indeed, the pilots who represent the Battle of Britain become so much absorbed in their role day by day and so much identify themselves with the characters they represent that they begin to think that they are involved in a real battle. Thus, they use live ammunition and shoot down a plane (Barnes 162). In another part of the isle, people with the role of smugglers actually begin to smuggle pornographic material, jewellery and other goods from the continent (199). Furthermore, crimes like counterfeiting, illegal distillation of spirits and even prostitution are also committed on the isle. In this context, Dr Max's comment on "the other face" of history can be seen as a foreshadowing of the negative events which are about to arise in England, England:

R-eality is r-ather like a r-abbit, if you'll forgive the aphorism. The great public –our distant, happily distant paymasters– want reality to be like a pet bunny. They want it to lol op along and thump its foot picturesquely in its home-made hutch and eat lettuce out of their hand. If you gave them the real thing, something wild that bit, and, if you'll pardon me, shat, they wouldn't know what to do with it. Except strangle it and cook it.
(133)

When the "controlled history" gets out of control in England, England, the administration decides to punish the "outlaws of history" in order to intimidate the others. As a characteristic of dystopian literature, chastisement is turned into a spectacle (Burnett and Rollin 86) and ironically enough the punishment brings profit to the company since it is turned to a public attraction and the tickets for it are grabbed up (Barnes 201). Robin Hood and his men also over-identify with the characters they represent (248) and become a real criminal gang which illegally hunts animals, steals and wants "to ambush the sheriff's men everywhere" (224). As a chastisement, this time the company even does not

hesitate to arrange an anachronistic clash. SAS commandos equipped with high techno weapons, actually performing a rescue operation on an Iranian Embassy, are called to establish order. The show-intended clash becomes a real one because the gang members run amok and one of the actors is wounded. The visitors enthusiastically, ignorant of the implausibility of the situation, watch the juxtaposition of the past and the present, the real and the hyperreal which indicates that such visitors are more in search for 'titillation' than education (Walsh 97). All these events emphasize that England, England has developed into a realm of hyperreality; a world *more* real than the world it seems to simulate.

The third chapter entitled 'Albion' is set back in Old England which "has lost its history and therefore –since memory is identity– all its sense of itself" (Barnes 251). Albion has become a pre-industrial country seeking for its past and as such it can be seen as a parody of the previous project on the Isle of Wight. The protagonist Martha Cochrane is now an old woman and her search for reality or the meaning of life, which in itself can be seen as a utopia, has ceased. But the people in Old England, like herself at the beginning of the novel, are busy trying to re-establish the old traditions and values. Ironically enough, they even have a handbook from which they can look up some descriptions about 'their past'. This remark is indicative in that "all that was once directly lived [...] has become mere representation today" (Barnes 54; Debord, 1994:12) and also justifies Baudrillard's claim that every simulation becomes a sign of its own. Consequently, Old England, though it once was the origin, cannot surpass England, England anymore. Old England's search for itself can best be summarized by Baudrillard's remark about the de-differentiation of the real and the image:

The imaginary was the alibi of the real, in a world dominated by the reality principle. Today, it is the real that has become the alibi of the model, in a world controlled by the principle of simulation. And, paradoxically, it is the real that has become our true utopia –but a utopia that is no longer in the realm of the possible, that can only be dreamt of as one would dream of a lost object. (1994: 122-3)

England, England in the literary sphere corresponds to Baudrillard's theory in the philosophical sphere: the Baudrillardian character is used to give all the information about simulation, reality and simulacra. Even the intertextuality which we come across when the Baudrillardian character comments on the condition of modern society that "there remains nothing in culture or in nature which has not been transformed and polluted according to the means and interests of modern society" (Barnes 55) reminds us of a further simulation. This statement is implied to be cited from Debord's work (1998:10) and indeed it is. So, in this context, Barnes plays successfully with the identities of the contemporary thinkers as he creates a kind of hybrid character of philosophers.

To conclude, *England, England* has both utopian and dystopian themes which also indicate that a utopia for someone can be a dystopia for others, again the slippery ground for any criteria, which goes with the postmodernist maxim: 'anything goes'. Amid the grim realities of the chaotic postmodern world, consumer society seems to have lost all its traditional values and everything has taken on an incredibly strange turn. Specifically heritage tourism, which is often claimed to have an important role in the preservation and dissemination of cultural values, is also far from living up to its objective. In fact, the values which the heritage tourism claims to have resuscitated from the past are mere simulacra, adapted according to consumerist needs. As a result, these self-reflexive values put us at risk of alienating ourselves from the 'original' culture rather than bringing us closer to it. In his dystopian novel, which is open to (re)interpretation, Barnes violates the rules of the type and as a postmodern novelist he does not offer any solution. Having emphasized a world eviscerated of all its meaning with its inhabitants all reified and having reflected postmodernist/consumerist/dystopian society devoid of any stable conception of reality, Barnes skill/playfully has created the void of nightmares of any kind.

NOTES

- ¹ In this study the word, 'visitor(s)' also refers to 'consumer(s)' and 'tourist(s)' concurrently.
- ² Here one may remember George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* among many others.

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